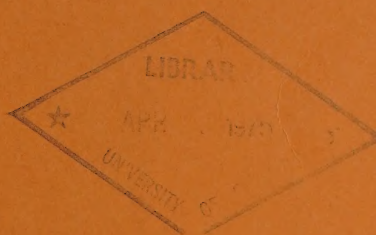


*Ontario Ministry of Community and
Social Services*

Progress Report

Advisory Council on Day Care



January, 1975

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Ontario

Ministry of
Community and
Social
Services

Honourable Rene Brunelle,
Minister,
Ministry of Community &
Social Services.

January 6th, 1975.

Dear Mr. Brunelle:

Re.: Progress Report.

I have the honour to present to you on behalf of
your Advisory Council on Day Care the attached
Progress Report on the activities of Council.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Barstow, Chairman.

Harriet Elizabeth Black,
Rev. Ian Harland,
Miriam Herman,
Roberta McFadden,
Rea McGarry,
Prof. Harry M. Morrow,
Gladys Rolling,
Anne Stafford,
Kathy Taylor,
Imelda Chenard.

AB/in.

Advisory Council on Day Care

Introduction to Progress Report

In August of 1974, the Honourable Rene Brunelle, Minister of Community and Social Services, announced the appointment of an Advisory Council on Day Care.

The overall purpose of the Council is to advise the Minister respecting the development of day care services in Ontario, and its functions include recommending further improvements in the delivery system, assisting in interpreting and recommending priorities for the expenditure of public funds, recommending areas which require research, and advising the Minister on the interpretation of the Day Nurseries Act and regulations.

The Council is able to obtain consultation and to receive briefs and submissions, and will from time to time assess the needs for day care in the Province and identify gaps in the system.

All proposed changes to regulations, while still in the formative stages, will be submitted to Council and their recommendations will receive full consideration before any regulations are passed by Order in Council.

The Advisory Council has been meeting regularly since its appointment, and has reported to the Minister on some matters which have been directed to it for comment. We continue to encourage response from all sectors of the public wishing to express their interest in the development of day care services in the Province.

The attached Progress Report gives full details on the Council activities, and covers the various subjects which have been discussed and considered by the members to date.

Progress Report Advisory Council on Day Care January, 1975

The Advisory Council on Day Care presents this Progress Report to the Honourable Rene Brunelle, Minister of Community and Social Services. Attached is a list of the Council meetings held, and of the people and organizations whom we have met during the time since our appointment in August, and the Council's Report on Fire Safety.

Since this is a Progress Report, there are not major recommendations concerning specific fields of service, however, may we draw your attention to these points:

1. There is a necessity for research and analysis to be undertaken.
2. The Day Care Community needs to be assured that the Government does not intend to change from its present policy to one of financing Day Care *only* at the level of stated minimums.
3. We recommend that present regulations with regard to Staff/Child ratios remain in effect until alternative methods of establishing staff complements can be explored more fully.

The following is an outline of the course of our deliberations to date:

I. Objectives for Day Care

From its first meetings, the Council agreed that it must consider Day Care in the total perspective, and would only consider specific issues in relation to the whole concept of Day Care Services for children. Once objectives could be declared, the individual concerns would be more easily defined and responded to.

In this regard, Council has discussed Day Care in the context of:

1. A service for children – safe, healthy, developmental, enriching, nurturing, preventive.
2. A service for families – support for parents needing surrogate child care for any one of a variety of reasons.
3. A community service – one of a network of services to families and children, interrelated and enhancing the general welfare of the community.

In developing day care in such a context in this Province, major factors must be considered:

1. Access to Services

No one should be barred from utilizing Day Care Services because of their geographic *or* economic situation. But to *guarantee* access to day care involves provision of sufficient services of sufficient variety across the Province.

2. Variety of Services

There are many varieties of care being given now, and there are also emerging needs which indicate the necessity for further variety of services being developed to meet them. No one type of Day Care could possibly meet the variety of situations across the Province, so the ultimate goal must be for a flexible system of Day Care Services, which in conjunction with other community services can combine forms of care to meet changing needs.

3. Quality of Services

The “early years” are known to be the most important in the development of a child – physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. It is essential therefore that the care given to children during those years enables them to achieve their potential. In situations where some control can be exercised to ensure this (and Day Care is one), there must be standards set and practised which will provide the proper environment for the full development of the child.

4. Quantity of Services

There is no accurate measure of *need* for Day Care. There is however an increasing *demand* for a variety of Day Care Services, and an evident need for expansion in their provision and availability.

5. Priorities for Services

No one can say who needs Day Care most. “Need” can be economic, geographic, ethnic, social, emotional – it can be the need of the child or the need of the parent – it can be for special services or partial services. There do have to be priorities established for the most evident needs to be met,

and such priorities need regular review. Also, recognition must be given to variations in priorities, where individual communities may have more urgent needs than the established priorities encompass.

6. Roles of Government

Government has had two major roles to play concerning the provision of Day Care Services. One is the setting of minimum standards for the licensing of programs, thus ensuring a certain basic quality of care and protection for children. The other role is the provision of financial resources to enable certain approved organizations to operate services and to subsidize services for people in need. These two roles are *separate* functions, and there needs to be clear definition of their *separate* purposes.

In this framework the Advisory Council would state that the objectives for Day Care in Ontario should be the development of a variety of Day Care Services as a part of a network of services to families and children, of a sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of children, parents and communities across the Province. For the purpose of immediate discussion, the Council agreed that it would limit its attention to services for children needing care for the full day, including group programs, private home day care and any combinations of these. They would consider specific questions in this context, reserving matters of other forms of care for long-term consideration.

II. Finances

The Council found that there were financial implications for many of the subjects discussed. The following points were made:

1. Our preliminary estimates indicate that savings to the Province would be minimal under the proposals for staff reductions introduced in the June Policy Statement.
2. There is a great deal of concern within the Day Care community that the June Policy Statement may have expressed the intent of Government to finance programs *only* at the proposed minimum staff levels. Under present policy the Provincial Government shares the operating costs of municipal and other approved programs at a level mutually agreed upon, which can vary from program to program. The Council would urge that

the present practice be retained, and that assurances be made to the public that it is the Government's intention to continue this policy.

3. If there is concern for a quantity of good day care to become available across the Province, there must also be a commitment of financial resources to make this possible. There is no doubt that there is a variety of ways to use such resources, but they must be made available in sufficient supply to ensure the development, not just the maintenance, of services.
4. Present plans for immediate expansion of Day Care Services are mainly concerned with the capital costs expansion project, which provides funds for the building or renovation of premises for group facilities. The Council urges that, as further sums are made available, consideration be given to additional fields for expansion, such as private home day care, and to varieties of expansion possibilities. In this way, financial resources can be allocated to a number of areas, providing incentive for expansion to meet needs, rather than putting all the dollar eggs into one day care basket – group care facilities.
5. One financial matter which may have serious budget implications for the future concerns the salaries paid to day care personnel. Numbers of briefs and letters have brought this matter to the attention of Council, with the implication that current salary levels are low and need to be raised. Since salaries represent approximately 70% of current operating budgets, any changes could have a substantial effect on costs. Council has noted this concern, and will attempt to gather further information for future discussion.

III. Government Policy Statement of June, 1974

Council has reviewed the Policy Statement of June, 1974 and is seeking clarification of some of the proposals contained in it. We are in overall agreement with the general intent of the policy, and offer the following comments:

1. We share the concern for the many children who are in need of Day Care, and not now reached by services. There must be expansion to meet this need, and there must be solid information collected to show where and to what degree it should be done.

2. We welcome the Government's commitment to the provision of more Day Care for more children in Ontario, and we again suggest that such a commitment implies the allocation of sufficient resources to accomplish this task.
3. We agree with the current capital expansion program which provides opportunity for the creation of new group facilities and extends this opportunity to additional groups and organizations in the community. However, before additional capital programs are implemented, the Council would like to comment on procedures and priorities for such capital programs, and to suggest alternative ways in which financial incentives might be provided for the expansion of a variety of services.
4. We commend the major priorities established by the Policy Statement – provision of services for the handicapped, access to services for the low-income and native people, and the rapid development of Day Care Services across the Province. We suggest a regular review and monitoring of priorities to ensure their adjustment to meet changing needs.

While we agree with the general goals of the Policy Statement, we wish to offer comments on the specific proposals which were suggested as the means of achieving them:

1. *Fire Safety* – The Council has prepared a report on fire safety and submitted it to the Minister. (Appendix A)
2. *Kitchens* – Council has not considered the question of catering, but two points should be mentioned: present policy permits catering, so an amendment to regulations may not be required; also, the physical building requirements for Kitchens are mainly determined by the local authorities (fire and health) and are not solely under the control of the Ministry.
3. *Staff Qualifications* – Council has not yet considered this question in detail, but will be looking into it in the near future.
4. *Staff/Child Ratios* – Council has started its deliberations regarding changes in staff/child ratios proposed by the statement. It has received a great deal of material from individuals and groups on this matter, and has also received material which was tabled in the Legislature when the Policy Statement was presented. We have consulted with representatives of various organizations and also with the Ministry staff, and present the following points which we would identify at this point in our discussion:

- a) There is a great deal of opposition to the suggested new ratios from many segments of the community.
- b) There is no research available on ratios of which we are aware, which could support or reject the proposed new schedule.
- c) The savings which the statement suggests could be effected by the introduction of the proposed ratios are difficult to substantiate. Certain factors must be taken into consideration, e.g.:
 1. Reduction in staff would only occur in larger centres with a sufficient number of children in each age group, to be able to effect a ratio where one less staff member would be required.
 2. These changed ratios would not mean more children served in these programs, since the number of children in any program is controlled by the physical setting and the capacity for which the program is licensed.
 3. There is no guarantee that any accrued savings from a reduction in staff costs would be passed on in reduced fees to parents. But attaching dollar or percentage figures to these calculations tends to cloud the real issue, which is the number of staff needed to give proper care to the children in the program.
- d) The current literature on child development stresses the importance of the pre-school years, and emphasizes the necessity for the constancy and warmth of adult relationship during this period. In a full-day care situation, this relationship must be provided by staff, and there is undoubtedly a limit to the number of children any one staff member can provide with this important nurturing.
- e) There has been concern expressed about the safety of children in an emergency situation with a reduced complement of staff.
- f) Council is not convinced that the number of staff necessary for a good program can or should be determined by the number and ages of children, according to a fixed schedule of ratios. We favour the development of a formula approach, whereby the purposes of the program, number and ages of children served, number of "contact hours" needed for each child to achieve program goals, physical facilities of the building, etc., could be combined to produce actual staff requirements for any individual program in any place in the Prov-

ince. We are studying this further, and recommend that the present regulation regarding staff/child ratios remain operative until alternative methods of establishing staff complements can be explored more fully.

IV. General Policy Directions of the Ministry

The Council has discussed the future plans for program development with senior staff of the Ministry. We understand that present plans call for Ministry staff at the area and district level to be involved in the development of programs, working with the local Government and Community. In day care, this would mean consultants attached to the district staff would work with the Municipality, local authorities (fire and health), and community representatives in developing the variety of Day Care Services needed to meet the local needs. This indicates a positive future direction, for the planning and development of services and for the involvement of citizens and local government in the process. We welcome this approach, and only point out that there will need to be a sufficient number of qualified staff with decision-making power at this level to ensure its success.

V. Research

The terms of reference of the Advisory Council include the function of recommending to the Minister areas of the Day Care Program that require additional research. The Council has identified several areas where research or analysis is required before full information can be utilized. We propose :

1. Research on Staff/Child Ratios

There is no satisfactory research known to us on staff/child ratios. Current work in exploring alternative systems of establishing staff complements needs to have research back-up, covering the operation (and results) of current staff/child ratios operative in various jurisdictions.

2. Research on "Needs" for Day Care

The collection and analysis of any existing research on "needs" should be undertaken. This could indicate what is available and what gaps there are in information required for planning. There should be

research on current arrangements made for the care of children, demands for day care which are not being met, the kinds of Day Care Services being requested, and the quantity and location of such requests. Such information is essential in preparing planning projections, considering priorities for resource allocation, providing development incentives, deciding options for development of services and ensuring flexibility in planning and delivery.

3. Analysis

Analysis is needed of current literature and documentation amassed by the Council, with emphasis on the collection and analysis of relevant material on the development and operation of day care services in other jurisdictions.

4. Salaries Survey

A factual survey of staff salaries in Day Care in Ontario would indicate levels of pay for various categories of "qualified staff". Such information would be helpful for any work connected with staff costs, staff qualifications and comparative operating costs of programs.

Detailed proposals for immediate work will be submitted to the Minister in the near future.

VI. Future Council Activities

The Advisory Council recognizes that there is a major task to be accomplished in advising the Minister regarding the many aspects of Day Care in Ontario.

In the immediate future, Council will continue its work on staff/child ratios, study Private Home Day Care, infant care, staff training and qualifications, and priorities and planning for the allocation of capital resources. Also, members of the Council plan to meet with the public in various regions of the Province.

In the long term, it will consider: the variety of services required to meet needs, economic benefits to the community, alternatives for service development and delivery, the allocation of day care resources, innovative programs, public education regarding day care and the current development of day care under other jurisdictions, so that it may present comprehensive and viable recommendations on these matters to the Minister.

Regular reports will be submitted to the Minister on the progress of Council deliberations.

Respectfully submitted,
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DAY CARE

January 6th, 1975.

Council Statistics

Council has had 14 days of meetings since its formation:

August 7th, 13th, 26th, 27th;
September 9th, 10th;
October 7th, 8th, 22nd;
November 7th, 8th, 25th, 26th;
December 9th.

During those meetings it has met with:

The Minister
The Provincial Secretary for Social Development
Day Nurseries Branch Consultants
Financial Officer
Legal Services Officer

Assistant Deputy Minister, Delivery
Executive Director of Social Services
Director of Children's Services Bureau
Financial and Administrative Services
Provincial Fire Marshal Engineering Officer
Fire Prevention Officer, Oshawa Fire Department
Representatives of:
Day Care Reform Action Alliance
Ontario Committee on the Status of Women
Association Early Childhood Education, Ont.
Miniskools

The Council has prepared a full report on Fire Safety and forwarded it to the Minister.

The Council has considered at the Minister's request:

- proposed amendment to DN-Act regulations covering capital grants for the Day Care Expansion Project.
- proposed amendment to DN-Act regulations covering the sharing of operational costs for programs for the handicapped.

The Council has received from the public:

Submissions from organizations	–	20
Submissions from individuals	–	150
Petitions and form letters	–	550 names

Appendix A

REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES RE FIRE SAFETY AND DAY CARE

Representatives of the Advisory Council on Day Care met with a representative of the Provincial Fire Marshal's office, the Fire Prevention Officer of the Municipal Fire Department and Day Nurseries Branch staff to consider fire safety in day care programs. This meeting considered a number of the factors involving the safety of children in day care programs and submits the following recommendations:

1. That the Day Nurseries Act and regulations contain only *major* fire safety requirements, and that they also contain a requirement for the approval of the local fire authority before a day care program is licensed for operation to ensure proper fire safety for day care programs. Therefore, the present Day Nurseries Act regulations in this regard should remain unchanged.
2. That present D.N.A. regulations 3(n) (i) and (ii) regarding storey levels be retained, with the addition of a requirement that the approval of the Provincial Fire Marshal and the local fire authorities, in addition to the approval of the Director, be obtained before any exceptions are granted for locating day care programs above the third storey.
3. That present regulations under the D.N. Act with regard to Fire Drill and Emergency Information, Regulation 11 (a), (b) and (c), be retained.
4. That Regulation 5 "Equipment and Furnishings" be amended to include the requirement that each day care program have its own telephone where telephone service is available.
5. That the present information sheet "Fire Precautions in Day Nurseries" be upgraded to the equivalent of "Guidelines", and that it be amended to include the safety factors listed in the full report.
6. That the Guidelines on fire precaution be used in the course curriculum for any training program for day care personnel.
7. That the present Guidelines for Private Home Day Care be up-dated to include a fire safety check-list, prepared in cooperation with local fire authorities, to be used in the selection and supervision of P.H.D.C. homes.
8. That procedures for approval of fire safety for licensing of programs in remote areas without local fire authorities be established through the fire safety officers of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and that these same procedures be utilized for the establishment of fire emergency procedures.
9. That the Ontario Fire Marshal be consulted about methods of obtaining comments from local fire authorities concerning present fire safety requirements for day care programs.
10. That a method be sought to obtain cooperation from municipal governments and local fire authorities for a twice-yearly inspection of licensed day care programs for both fire safety and emergency drill procedures.

Respectfully submitted,
Advisory Council on Day Care

REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES RE FIRE SAFETY AND DAY CARE

The Advisory Council on Day Care has considered the matter of fire safety for children in day care and wishes to present its comments and recommendations to the Minister in this important area.

Responsibilities of Provincial and Local Fire Authorities

There is a great deal of misunderstanding concerning the respective roles of the Provincial Fire Marshal and the local fire authorities regarding fire safety requirements for day care programs. The Provincial Fire Marshal is responsible for approving building plans for certain classes of buildings, but these do *not* include the plans for buildings erected as day care centres. The only occasion where his office would be involved would be when a day care centre is included in plans as part of another building such as a university or hospital. The fire safety of a building housing a day care program is the responsibility of the municipal or local fire authority, and such local authority is also involved in fire emergency procedures for evacuation of the building. Any so-called "arbitrary" requirements for fire safety are embodied in local by-laws and regulations and these vary considerably from place to place in the Province.

At present a National Fire Code has been prepared, and when this receives final approval, it is planned to develop a Provincial Fire Code based on the National Code, which will become a mandatory requirement for all municipalities when enacted. A Provincial Building Code has also been prepared which will be enacted in the near future. However, until these Codes are in effect, the prime authority for fire safety for day care programs and their buildings rests with local jurisdiction.

The Day Nurseries Act and regulations could include detailed fire safety requirements for day care programs. However, if such were the case, the policing of these requirements would become the responsibility of the Ministry and there would still be local requirements to be met in accordance with municipal regulations.

It is therefore recommended that the Day Nurseries Act and regulations contain only *major* fire safety requirements, and that they also contain a requirement for the approval of the local fire authority before a day care program is licensed for operation to ensure proper fire safety for day care programs. Therefore, the present Day Nurseries Act regulations in this regard should remain unchanged.

Storey Level for Day Care Programs

At present the D.N.A. regulations provide that day care programs shall not be located above the third storey for children from six to nine years of age and not above the second storey for children under six. The government policy statement of June 4 has proposed that this requirement should be removed from the regulations.

A number of considerations need to be identified:

1. Fire authorities consulted (a representative of the Provincial Fire Marshal and the Fire Prevention Officer of a Municipal Fire Department) expressed their reservations about permitting day care programs to operate above the third storey.
2. Fire safety for the day care program at upper levels would be directly affected by the major purpose of the building in which the program is located.
3. Evacuation procedures become more difficult when programs are located at higher levels. A "stacking factor" which could result would seriously hamper the removal of numbers of small children from upper storeys.
4. Evacuation procedures from higher levels would require more adults to supervise the children in emergency situations. Elevators cannot be used and groups of small children negotiating many flights of stairs could need a good deal of adult help.
5. Current regulations permit programs to be located above the second or third storey upon receipt of approval by the Director of the Day Nurseries Branch.

In view of the above points, *it is recommended* that present D.N.A. regulations 3(n) (i) and (ii) regarding storey levels be retained, with the addition of a requirement that the approval of the Provincial Fire Marshal and the local fire authorities, in addition to the approval of the Director, be obtained before any exceptions are granted for locating day care programs above the third storey.

Emergency Procedures

Current D.N.A. regulations require that the operator of a day care program shall be responsible for establishing fire drill procedures in conjunction with the local Fire Marshal, and for instructing staff and children in these procedures (Reg. 11 (a), (b), (c)).

Day Nurseries Branch has issued an instruction sheet "Fire Precautions in Day Nurseries" to enlarge upon these regulations, as guidance for operators in fulfilling their required responsibility. This sheet is used by provincial staff in advising operators about fire precautions and emergency procedures, and it has also been sent to local fire departments across the Province (see pages 11 and 12).

However, the instruction sheet is only an information pamphlet, and therefore cannot be used as a "requirement" for the establishment of good fire safety precautions. There are also a number of factors which are not noted in its contents:

1. Recognition of hazard areas and precautions for these:

Sleeping rooms

- Cots should be spaced at not less than 18" apart and with an aisle 36" wide.
- Sufficient staff available during sleeping periods – as most vulnerable time for an emergency situation to occur.

Kitchen

- A fire-proof door should be required.
- One adult should be responsible for closing this door in case of fire drill or emergency.

Furnace room

- Should be closed off by a fire wall.

Storage areas

- Safe storage for paints, cleaning materials and other flammables.

Staff room

- Proper precaution for smoking hazards.

2. The necessity of a telephone on the premises.
3. Maintenance of clear passageways in sleeping rooms, program rooms and hallways.
4. Maintenance at all times of an up-to-the-minute attendance record.
5. Emergency lighting for evening or night-time care situations.
6. Advance planning for use of other accommodation for the rest of the day, should the building be unusable.
7. In cooperation with the local Fire Marshal the establishment of a "bench mark" time for the complete evacuation of the premises.

Some of these fire safety measures will be required by local fire authorities, but the inclusion of all of

them in Day Nurseries Branch material could ensure that all operators of programs would be aware of these necessary precautions and procedures.

To ensure that the detailed instructions proposed would be utilized by all programs, it would be necessary to grade these instructions as "Guidelines", allowing provincial staff to use them as check-lists, for on-going supervision of licensed programs, in cooperation with the operator and local fire authorities. Such responsibility would indicate the necessity of having a sufficient number of qualified provincial staff available for this as well as other consultant duties.

Present training curriculums for day care staff do not include any training regarding fire safety or emergency procedures. The role of staff is extremely important in the fire precautions of any day care program so that both formal and informal training in these matters seems to be an important ingredient for insuring staff capability in these areas.

In view of these considerations, *it is recommended:*

- that present regulations under the D.N. Act with regard to Fire Drill and Emergency Information (Regulation 11, (a), (b) and (c)) be retained;
- that Regulation 5 "Equipment and Furnishings" be amended to include the requirement that each day care program have its own telephone where telephone service is available;
- that the present information sheet "Fire Precautions in Day Nurseries" be upgraded to the equivalent of "Guidelines" and that it be amended to include the safety factors listed above;
- that the guidelines on fire precaution be used in the course curriculum for any training programs for day care personnel.

Private Home Day Care

The present D.N.A. Regulation 15 d (2) (b) (iii) provides that the building in which P.H.D.C. is provided must comply with any by-law and any other law for the protection of persons from fire hazards. The interpretation of the regulations regarding P.H.D.C. is furnished by Guidelines issued by the D.N. Branch, and these Guidelines are at present under review.

There is some need for clarification of the role of local fire authorities in requirements for fire safety in P.H.D.C. homes. Should these homes be required to have additional fire safety factors because there are "day care" children added to the family? Should the fire safety requirements for group programs be applied to P.H.D.C. situations?

It would be impractical to try to apply the same fire safety standards to private homes as are required for group programs, but fire safety needs to be identified in home selection and supervision. However, where specific fire safety requirements are established, it should be recognized that the care giver should not be required to meet the cost of these and consideration should therefore be given to adding the costs of such fire safety requirements to the cost of operating the P.H.D.C. program, such costs to be shared on the same basis as all other operating costs.

It is therefore recommended that the present “Guidelines” for Private Home Day Care be up-dated to include a fire safety check-list prepared in co-operation with local fire authorities, to be used in the selection and supervision of P.H.D.C. homes.

Remote Areas

Programs on remote Indian reservations and in un-organized territories often face a long delay in obtaining fire clearances in order to obtain their initial license. There are no local fire authorities available, and it is difficult to arrange clearance from some equivalent authority from other jurisdictions. They also have difficulty in establishing proper fire drill procedures without a local fire authority to co-operate with them in this regard.

It is recommended that procedures for approval of fire safety for licensing of programs in remote areas without local fire authorities be established through the fire safety officers of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and that these same procedures be utilized for the establishment of fire emergency procedures.

Cooperation of Local Fire Authorities

It is apparent that the role of the local fire authority is extremely important in establishing and

maintaining good fire safety precautions in day care programs. The cooperation of these authorities is essential, if not only original licensing requirements but also ongoing fire safety procedures are to be established and maintained.

Because fire safety requirements vary considerably from municipality to municipality, it would seem to be most important that opinions should be sought from local fire authorities across the Province concerning day care programs. Also, ways should be sought to obtain the cooperation of the municipality and its fire authorities in maintaining a regular ongoing supervision of the fire emergency procedures once they have been established. *It is therefore recommended:*

- that the Ontario Fire Marshal be consulted about methods of obtaining comments from local fire authorities concerning present fire safety requirements for day care programs;
- that a method be sought to obtain cooperation from municipal governments and local fire authorities for a twice-yearly inspection of licensed day care programs for both fire safety and emergency drill procedures.

Conclusions

The safety of children in day care must be one of the major concerns in providing this service. This concern needs to be stated clearly at the provincial level, and every effort made to ensure that provincial staff, operators of programs and local fire authorities work in full cooperation in this area. We have therefore made a number of specific recommendations which are directed to achieving this goal.

Respectfully submitted,
Advisory Council on Day Care

Fire Precautions in Day Nurseries

The Day Nursery Regulations require that each nursery should have a definite plan of procedure laid down in case of fire and should practise fire drill regularly with the children.

This drill should be held once or twice a week until children and staff are familiar with the procedure and then at least *once a month* throughout the year.

With these frequent practices, the children and staff would be able to carry through with confidence in case of an emergency in the school. It is advisable to keep a record of the dates on which fire drill is held.

Introducing the Children to the Fire Drill

Either of the following plans has proved successful in many nurseries:

The supervisor might think it wise to avoid the term "Fire Drill" and tell the children it was a game to see how quickly and quietly they could all get outside. The children will be interested in following the procedure if it is outlined in special detail for them.

On the other hand the supervisor could tell the children in a matter-of-fact way that this is what they would do in case there was a fire. Discussion should be business-like as in any other routine. A visit to a fire station could be planned, and children would enjoy discussions, songs and stories about fire trucks and firemen.

The supervisor must keep in mind that the fire drill routine is different from other routines in that there is more emphasis on responding promptly to the signal and that speed (although without rushing or excitement) is important. Ordinarily we give the pre-school child time to make the change from one type of activity to another, and we encourage him to put away what he is playing with, to roll up his rest rug, or to carry out his dishes.

If the fire drill comes in the middle of his rest period, the young child will want to put away his rug first. He will want to finish his tomato juice and put the glass back on the tray before going out. This is what we must watch for in teaching the fire drill period routine. *This is one time the children must leave what they are doing and respond promptly to the signal.*

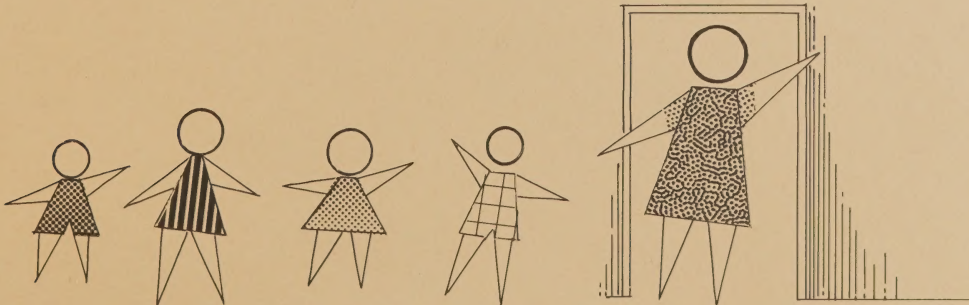
General Instructions

The exact procedure cannot be outlined because each nursery will have to plan according to the lay-out of the building and the number of adults on duty. All staff, including household staff and caretaker, should have special duties. Volunteers should know exactly what they are to do. Such duties should be:

- a) To sound the fire alarm signal immediately upon discovery of a fire. This would be done by the person making the discovery.
- b) To gather the children from different sections of the building.
- c) To be responsible for conducting children outside.
- d) To be responsible for door or stairway hazards, etc.
- e) To check the number of children to be sure every child is present.
- f) To telephone the alarm to Fire Department.
- g) To use the first aid fire fighting equipment.

It will be necessary to outline a different procedure for different periods of the day.

Play periods
Dining room periods
Sleeping periods



Practices should be held on different days of the week if necessary, to give practice to different volunteers.

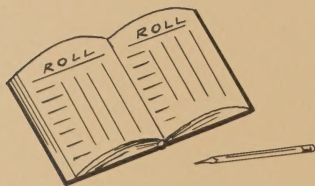
Every member of staff, including household staff and caretaker, should be responsible for familiarizing herself with the fire procedure in her nursery and every supervisor for making sure that duties are explained to each new member of staff and that volunteers read fire instructions.

Adults must act with calm assurance and unhurriedly, as in any other part of the day's routine. There is never any need to rush, either in practice or in case of fire.

The outline of procedure indicating as in a timetable the duties of each adult, and the details of the procedure for the children should be posted in the various rooms of the nursery.

Planning Fire Drill Procedure

1. Decide on a signal. This should be something not used at any other time. A whistle or bell is suitable and should be hung in a central place.
2. Choose some central place in the nursery where children should be gathered.
3. Teach the children to line up one behind the other. It is easier to make a line along the wall if this is possible. Another suggestion is to keep a rope in the playroom. One adult holds each end and the children are taught to put one hand on the rope and march in this position. Knots may be tied a foot apart and each child told to hold at a knot. It is not advisable to use a rope where children have to go down a flight of stairs.
4. When children are assembled in a line, children are led outside with one adult leading the way and other staff at intervals and at end of line.
5. Children should walk quietly to the playground, not to the street. There should be no playing or talking allowed during practice.



6. Once the children are outside, check to make sure every child is present.

Fire Prevention in the Nursery

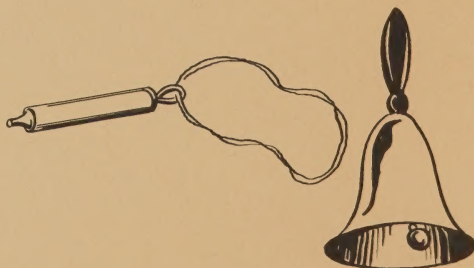
It is most important for nursery supervisors to be cautious of fire hazards at all times. Inflammable materials should be stored in fire-proof containers. Paints should be kept in tin boxes. Materials gathered for creative work can be conveniently stored in tin or glass gallon jars. Good housekeeping is as important from the point of view of fire prevention as it is to the maintenance of the appearance and sanitation of the nursery.

At Christmas and other festive occasions fire hazards may be greatly increased by the use of paper decorations and by the presence of large numbers of children and adults. It is possible to secure flame-proof crepe paper and this is the only type that should be used for decoration. Crepe paper decorations should not be near sources of heat such as radiators, pipes or light fixtures.

The Christmas tree itself must be carefully considered in relation to fire hazards. It is not possible to flame-proof a tree but if it is sprayed with a flame-retarding mixture such as 9 oz. borax, 4 oz. boracic acid to 1 gal. water, the safety factor will be increased. It is also wise to set the tree in a tub of water to prevent it drying out. It should not be placed near a doorway, a fireplace or exit and it should be securely wired so that it will not fall over. If it is lighted with electricity these lights should be of an approved type and never be on unless an adult is present.

Electric candles should be used in place of ordinary candles. If it is necessary to use open-flame candles for ritual purposes, *one adult must be stationed beside the candles at all times.*

The nursery should work closely with the municipal Fire Department and be ready at all times to carry out any suggestions that the Fire Chief may have for safety precautions in a building.



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